

The Athenian Mercury:

Tuesday, July 26. 1692. Licens'd, J. F.

Quest. 1. I'm a Young Woman, not having the vanity to think my self beautiful enough to be ranked amongst the first Rate, but those of a lower degree, yet having as I hop'd just so much as to have kept my Husband to my self. Now having an intollerable Jealous Husband (without provocation I protest) and lately surprizing him with a Woman, I woud know, whether I being strongly solicited by a Gentleman much above my Quality, and extreamly obliging, may lawfully yield him those Favours not fit to be mention'd here, and whether it woud be a Crime, considering my Husband's provocation by Jealousie, as also his falseness to me?

Answ. Adultery is absolutely forbid, without any restriction whatever. God Almighty made no proviso's, nor other remedy but a Legal Divorcement, and the penalty dependant upon the breach of this Command, is no less than a certain exclusion out of Heaven: So that, *Mitam*, if you value your Interest there, or the satisfaction of an honourable peacefull breast in this Life, you cannot prostitute either to your Resentments. We are not insensible, that 'tis the practice of many to take such a Revenge, but their Passion first hurried 'em away from their Reason, as well as their Innocence, for what an unaccountable Folly is it, that I shou'd ruin my self to vex another, and often fail in that too. Your Husband injur'd himself more than you; 'tis your pity and Prayers that are the debt you owe him for it: but suppose that he injur'd you only, and in the highest degree possible, (as perhaps falsenes to one another's Beds bids very fair for it) your Virtue is the greater, to forgive like a Christian, if you love him; if not, and if you have a Command of your self, Divorcement is the best remedy, provided you have positive proof of his basenes, thô after all, you may perhaps be mistaken as to his falsenes, for all appearances are not realities. As for your Management of his Jealon-sie, see the Advice given you in the Author of the whole Duty of Man.

Quest. 2. I desire to know the Natural Cause of the winds rising and falling, its changing and turning to and fro, and where it is when 'tis fallen?

Answ. When exhal'd Vapours are so condens'd and jostled together by contrary Winds, that they become heavier than the Air that keeps 'em up, they must necessarily subside; and since there's no penetration of Bodies, that Air that is under 'em must be driven away, and cause what we call an Agitation, or blowing of the Winds; as to its changing or turning, 'tis according to the position of Vapours or Exhalations, those which are the largest always prevailing against the other, and where three, or more meet in one point, it causes a Whirlwind. As for the latter part of the Question, that asks where the Wind is when fallen, we answer 'tis equally dispers'd and extended every where, without any other Body to put it in Motion.

Quest. 3. I don't remember that ever I found any Text of Scripture againt Self Murder: I confess the sixth Commandment forbids Murder in general terms, and some argue thus, the sixth Commandment forbids Murder, but Self-murder is Murder, Ergo, &c. But that sort of Logick I think hardly worth a disproving, nor do I conceive it to be at all repugnant to any Principle of the Law of Nature for a Man to be his own Executioner on some accounts: Such as where 'tis morally impossible for the remtinder of ones Life to be otherwise than miserable, or any ways further serviceable to ones Countrey. And 'twas so far from being thought unlawful by the old Romans, that the most Learned amongst them thought it justifiable and prud' too, as appears by Cato, Scipio, &c. Query, How it appears that this Fall is, as is generally receiv'd, a damnable sin?

Answ. Its enough that that Text forbids Murder in General, and that no one can deny but Self-murder is

Murder; and such as are not pleas'd with such a way of arguing, are desir'd to produce any place in Sacred Writ that either excepts Self-murder out of that Command, or gives us one single Instance which justifies the practice. But why you can't conceive it repugnant to any Principle of the Law of Nature for a Man to be his own Executioner, is a riddle; for the Law of Nature enjoyns self-preservation before any thing else, and every thing else is subservient to that one Principle, for how can a dead Man be temperate, just, modest, &c. every Creature teaches us this Universal Instinct, either by defending its self, or flying from its Invader. As for the Salvo, or excuse which pleads misery, unserviceableness to ones Countrey, it may be fully answer'd by this one Consideration, That we are God Almighty's Creatures, made for his Ends and Glory rather than for our own, and that therefore 'tis the most Sacrilegious Felony imaginable to offer to dispose of our selves: He is the best Judge of our Serviceableness to the Commonwealth, of what we call misery, and of every thing else, and therefore 'tis a presumptuous Arraignment of his Wisdom. A private Sentinel can't leave his Post without Death, in a warfare of finall Concern, if his Commander gives him not the liberty; and why a Man in so considerable an Engagement as his Vow in Baptism specifies, shou'd sneak out of the Field, or murder himself for fear of a few temporary evils, is something unaccountable, and argues not only disobedience to God Almighty, but a degeneracy from braveness, and worth of his own Nature.

Quest. 4. A Person of a very slender Fortune, and no Employ, thô judg'd qualified for most, was by the importunity of his Wife about a Year and a half since (being under apprehensions if we had Children we might want Conveniences, if not Necessaries) persuad'd to live with her only as a Brother, till I had some business whereby I might handsomely subsist, which reasonably I might have hop'd for before this time, I have bitherto notwithstanding all Temptations comply'd with her desire: we are both Young, she every way agreeable, and extreamly belov'd: Now the Question is, whether we don't hereby Sin against the Divine Dictate, Be fruitful, and Multiply, the chief end of our Conjunction as well as against Nature, and whether it does not argue a distrust of Providence, on which we ought entirely to rely. Your Answer is desired with what speed you can, for thereon depends our resolution?

Answ. If fearfulness and distrust of Providence be the only Cause, we believe it a very great Sin. As for what you call a Divine Dictate, Be Fruitful and Multiply, we look upon abstaining to be no Contradiction to it; for that appears rather to be a Declaration of our Liberty to do so, as also a supposition that we are indow'd with Natural Powers to that end. Any moral Conveniency, as a greater preparation for Sanctity of Life, or a mutual Consent to refrain, as from other things that are indifferent, would be certainly justifiable, but that fear suggested in the Query is below a Christian, and oppos'd to several express Texts in the Scripture, particularly part of our Saviours Sermon upon the Mount, which leaves no excuse for distrust of Providence, or a solicitous care for the future Concerns of this Life.

Quest. 5. Having sometimes made a dreadful Imprecation, that I would allow such a Person no more than such a Summ as was before agreed on by Arbitration, and now finding it absolutely necessary to do the contrary, since it will have very ill effects not only upon me, but upon all my Family if I do not: Query, whether my Imprecation be Obligatory?

Answ. A clearer account of matter of Fact might have directed to a more particular Answer: All we can say



say in general, is, That any Promise, Oath or Imprecation whatever, ceases to oblige, if the matter of it be impossible or unlawful; tho' any such Oath or dreadful Imprecation ought as a great sin to be heartily repented of.

Quest. 6. In some parts of America there is a sort of Snakes, called Rattle-Snakes, and if it happen that one of those Snakes come under a Tree, and there Center or stay under the same, and that it so happen that there is a Squirrel upon the same Tree, that then the Squirrel will run up and down the Tree, and leap from one part to another without intermission, till as 'tis believ'd it has almost wearied it self, and then will make a doleful Noise or Cry, without endeavouring to go from the Tree, and at last run down the main Body of the Tree, on that side the Snake lyeth, and so run directly into the Mouth of the Snake, and it swalloweth it whole. I desire to know the Reason why the Squirrel does not make its Escape from the Tree and Snake, rather than run into its Mouth to its own destruction?

Ans^w. The Harmony and Discord in Natural things, surpass the Scrutiny of the most Learned; they are so we see, but really why, is left only to the giver of Natures to all things. The Squirrel may be apprehensive of an approaching Danger by the Snakes encircling it self under the Trunk of the Tree, and after it has overcome that fear, it still has an Eye to the Snake, and therefore in pursuit of the destruction of the Snake, runs into the Mouth of the Snake, or the Snake may entice the Squirrel down into its Mouth, by what exceeds our Apprehension to solve: Neither doth the Question mention any action of the Snake's during this action of the Squirrels.

Quest. 7. Pray Gentlemen, give the Product of the underwritten Numbers, there being a Considerable Wager laid upon 'em, and you are chosen Arbitrators as to their Multiplication, if you please to accept of the Office? The Numbers are

$$L \ 11 : 11 : 11 \quad \text{and} \quad L \ 0 : 7 : 6$$
$$L \ 11 : 11 : 11 \quad \text{and} \quad L \ 0 : 0 : 6$$

Ans^w. As to the first Summe there being only Pounds prefixt, they may be supposed to be all so, and if so, the Product is found by a continual Multiplication of 'em one into another: If they stand for l. s. d. they are first to be reduc'd into Pence, and then Multiply'd. As to the latter Summ, if it be all Pounds, multiply it continually; but if Pence, since 6 d. is an aliquot part of 1 s. or 12 d. multiply 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ by $\frac{1}{2}$, or 1.5 by .5 in Decimals, for the Product. It is not worth our time to trouble our selves about Multiplication, nor indeed about such Questions, but that we meet with several who value themselves upon such Trifles.

Quest. 8. Since you have an Algebraist in your Company, I will trouble him with one Question. I look upon a Jacobite in the Commonwealth to be like an unknown troublesome Coefficient in a Compound Algebraick Equation, of which some are more difficult to resolve than others: Now suppose there are a great many Jacobites in Town, and of these there is a certain unknown Number represented by a, so irrecoverably impudent, and troublesome to the State, that they deserve to be Hang'd up to Morrow, I ask what that unknown Number is? if it be such, that if you add to its Square the Product made by the Multiplication of 64 (or b) in that unknown Number, it makes 1000000 (or c)?

Ans^w. We shall endeavour to find out the Value of a, make what Application you please of it. The Question propos'd stands thus, $aa + ba = c$. Then by adding half the Square of the Coefficient b to each part of the Equation, this perfect Square results $aa + ba + \frac{1}{4}bb = c + \frac{1}{4}cc$. then by extracting the Square root of each part of the Equation, there arises $a + \frac{1}{2}b = V: c + \frac{1}{4}cc - \frac{1}{2}b$. The sought Value in Letters and in Numbers like the Summ made by the addition of 1000000 and a Quarter of the Square root of 1000000, and then subduct 32 out of that Summ, the remainder Answers the Question, which the Querist may now easily perform himself, if he's in Love with either the Number or Application.

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